

## HERBERT JAMES CARTER.

1858-1940.

*(Memorial Series, No. 9.)**(With Portrait.)*

Herbert James Carter was born at Marlborough, Wiltshire, England, on 23rd April, 1858. He was educated at the Dorset County School and Aldenham Grammar School, and at Cambridge University, where he was a Scholar of Jesus College, and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts. He inherited his love of horses from his father, James Carter, who bred hunters on his farm outside Marlborough, and from this environment he developed his life-long love of the open air of country life. From his parents, too, he inherited his intense love of music, which remained one of his keenest interests throughout his life. During his school days and at Cambridge he was a keen cricketer, and he rowed for his College in its second boat. In 1882 he left England for Australia to become 2nd Mathematical Master at the Sydney Grammar School. He remained at the Grammar School until 1902, when he became Principal of Ascham Girls' School. He retired in 1914 and for the remainder of his life lived at Wahroonga, where he died on 16th April, 1940, within a few days of his eighty-second birthday. Soon after he arrived in Australia he married Antoinette Charlotte Moore, of Hasketon Manor House, Woodbridge, Suffolk; they enjoyed a long period of happy married life and she predeceased him by about two years.

Whilst he was a Master at the Sydney Grammar School he had charge of various houses taken as hostels for boys of the school, including "Port View" House, Paddington (1883-84), "Craignathan", Neutral Bay (Benjamin Boyd's house), from 1885 till about 1890, and "Martinsell", Petersham, from 1890 till 1902. For his success in these, as in his years in charge of "Ascham", he owed much to the practical assistance and encouragement of his wife.

On the voyage to Australia on the Orient liner "Potosi" he had as a fellow passenger Dr. Charles Dagnall Clark, with whom he formed a friendship which was responsible for Carter's interest in Entomology. Dr. Clark later lived at North Sydney and was a keen entomological collector—particularly of beetles and butterflies. His son became a keen collector and his enthusiasm communicated itself to the two Carter boys, who were about his own age. In these early days most of their school holidays were spent at Medlow, where Carter had a cottage from 1890 till 1902, and his first enthusiasm developed when he accompanied the boys on their collecting excursions. The favourite collecting ground of the boys close to Sydney was along Cook's River, near Canterbury. Collections were taken for identification to the Australian Museum, which was handy to the Grammar School, and here Carter made the acquaintance of W. J. Rainbow and George Masters, from whom he received much help and encouragement—assistance which he always acknowledged in later years as contributing to the prominent place gained by him amongst Australian Coleopterists. Carter's own first collecting expedition was to Lilyvale, thirty miles from Sydney, a locality which held his interest over a long period of years and to which he paid regular visits. On one of these visits, when he was accompanied by Commander J. J. Walker, he captured a cluster of the rare group Paussidae, which prompted Walker to remark on the 'paucity' of these insects.

Much of his early collecting round Sydney in the years 1902-03 was done in company with Commander John James Walker, Chief Engineer of H.M.S. *Ringarooma*, afterwards President, and Secretary, of the Entomological Society of London, and Editor of the *Entomologists' Monthly Magazine*. Carter in 1933 expressed his indebtedness to J. J. Walker for passing on "an enthusiasm for Natural History which filled his (Carter's) spare time for over thirty years".

From the time his enthusiasm was first kindled he lost no opportunity for collecting. He visited all the Australian States and explored both coastal and inland districts. He himself gave an account of many of his collecting experiences in his "Gulliver in the Bush"—Wanderings of an Australian Entomologist, published in 1933. In this book he also gave his impressions of many of his Australian colleagues, as well as visiting scientists and others met on his wanderings.

A few of his many interesting trips may be mentioned here.

He paid several visits to Mt. Kosciusko, under very different conditions. The first, about 1898, was in company with J. H. Maiden, and the route was via Cooma and Jindabyne, much the same as the present road. In those days the journey was no simple undertaking—provision of horses, food supply, and camping arrangements had to be very carefully organized in advance. The second visit was in 1900, by bicycle from Goulburn to Jindabyne via Cooma and then on horseback up the Thredbo Valley—a little-known and much more difficult route than that of the previous trip.

A third visit, in company with Judge Docker and Professor David, was made in 1905, first camping at Jindabyne and then up the Thredbo and Snowy. On this trip Professor David made his adventurous sounding of the Blue Lake in a home-made coracle. Later visits, in 1912 and 1926, with improved transport facilities, presented little difficulty.

Several visits to Tasmania included some before he became an entomological enthusiast. In 1883 he visited Hobart with a cricket team and had his first walk up Mt. Wellington "with no entomological enthusiasm". In 1885 he was again in Hobart and the Royal Tennis Court occupied much of his time. In 1901 he cycled from Launceston along the north coast to Stanley and also south to Hobart and Geeveston. In January, 1902, he collected his first Tasmanian beetles round Hobart during the meeting of the A.A.A.S. In 1917 he had his most productive Tasmanian visit, in company with A. M. Lea, when he visited some of the less frequented districts of the west, his main objective being Cradle Mt.

A trip which he always remembered was that to Western Australia on the occasion of the Perth Meeting of the A.A.A.S. in 1926. He was one of the large party of visitors from the eastern States who travelled by special train from Adelaide. The train stopped at various places *en route* to give the travellers opportunity to collect, and he recalled with delight the many sprints by elderly scientists after the train had whistled. He frequently referred to the excursions to the south-west (Pemberton) and to the north (Geraldton), to the delights of the Western Australian wild flowers, to the wonder, and amusement, evoked by his collecting umbrella, and to his very narrow escape from missing the train at one of the wayside stops.

A notable collecting trip undertaken in 1925 was at the invitation of Dr. G. A. Pockley by motor caravan. This was to the Darling River, Bourke, Louth, and Cobar—an excursion into the western country, opportunities for visiting which were not frequent.

Barrington Tops, in the Mount Royal Range, a not very accessible spot, was another favourite collecting ground, and he visited it, in company with different groups of scientists, in 1916, 1925, 1926 and 1927.

His early association with Commander Walker gave him personal contacts with scientific people in England, especially at the British Museum, and these helped him in his studies when he visited England in 1907 and again in 1922.

His published scientific papers all dealt with the Coleoptera—a group particularly abundant in the flowers of *Angophora* and *Leptospermum* which were in flower during the periods of his visits to Medlow when he first contracted his entomological enthusiasm from his sons.

His descriptions of new species were usually accompanied by revisionary work on the various families and genera, often by keys to assist other workers in determinations. This was often tedious and laborious work, but he did not spare himself, believing that he was doing a service to future taxonomic workers on the Coleoptera—indeed they will have reason to be grateful to him for his careful work in this direction. Mr. K. G. Blair,

with whom Carter was in constant communication on matters in which he had any doubts or uncertainties, paid the following tribute in an obituary notice (*Ent. Mon. Mag.*, July, 1940): "Realising from experience the need for revisionary work of what scattered knowledge there was rather than the continued accumulation of long lists of new species, Carter devoted his energies mainly to work of this nature, in the course of it himself describing some hundreds of new species. His revisions of Australian Tenebrionidae and Buprestidae, two families highly developed in the Australian fauna, as well as certain groups of the Cerambycidae, and latterly of the Dryopidae and Colydiidae, will long form the basis of all future work on these sections of the Australian fauna."

He was interested especially in the families Tenebrionidae, Buprestidae, Cistelidae and Dryopidae, though he did not hesitate to describe species in other families when opportunity offered. He described altogether some 44 new genera and 1167 new species in his papers, as well as an additional 11 genera and 67 species in collaboration with E. H. Zeck. His own work was always very careful, and he deplored the practice of some European entomologists who described Australian species without adequate knowledge or understanding of the problems involved. He realized that such work, based on insufficient material, would only add to the difficulties of future Australian workers, and this was one of the few things that roused him to express severely critical comment on entomological colleagues.

Results of his work comprise 65 papers (seven in collaboration with E. H. Zeck), of which 42 appeared in these PROCEEDINGS. In handing me the manuscript of a short paper on Dryopidae a few days before his death, he remarked that he found these small insects trying on his eyes and that this would probably be his last paper on the group. He had no premonition that it was to be his last piece of scientific work.

He was a tireless and energetic collector, never willingly missing an opportunity to secure fresh material and when on a trip he always resented passing anything that looked like a promising collecting area. For this reason he disliked travelling by car with a non-entomological driver who was often anxious to push on and would pass quickly by such spots. When he succeeded in persuading his driver to stop for a "few minutes" it was difficult to entice him back to the car if the hunting was good.

He was especially interested in the young recruits to entomological work and did all he could to stimulate their enthusiasm. E. H. Zeck wrote (*Aust. Naturalist*, 10 (8), April, 1941) that his loss would be felt not only by his colleagues and friends, but "the many 'embryos' in entomology, to whom he so willingly gave interesting and welcome advice and encouragement, will also regret his passing".

Apart from his scientific work he had a wide interest in literature and in music. It was rarely that one could visit him in later years without finding him with some interesting book at hand—sometimes the best of current literary works, sometimes travel books, and sometimes detective fiction which he read as entertainment and as an escape from more serious problems. A companion on many collecting excursions has told me that Carter could always be relied upon to produce from his suit-case a number of volumes of detective fiction when work was held up by bad weather or other cause. These were distributed among members of the party to help pass the time till collecting could be resumed. It is said of him that, though he claimed to carry these books on account of insomnia, those of his companions who sometimes shared a room with him had reason to envy him his powers of sound sleep, despite the fact that next morning he would rarely admit to having 'slept a wink' through the night.

Carter inherited a love of music from his parents, and it was during undergraduate days at Cambridge that he came under its spell which was to last to the end of his life. His study of the Classics in Music was deep and wide; Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms were the great masters that influenced him, but it was, perhaps, Schumann whose music drew the deepest echoes from his heart. In later life, he spent some of his happiest hours unravelling the mysteries of a symphony, or a pianoforte concerto with an enthusiastic disciple assisting at a second piano. He was a familiar figure at all the symphony concerts in Sydney as well as those given by visiting artists, and his intimate knowledge of the works of the Great Masters made of these supreme hours in his life.

He was an enthusiastic gardener and during his years of retirement his garden provided him with many hours of pleasant recreation. I well remember his interest at one stage in hand pollination of carnations and his satisfaction when his experiments produced some particularly fine result. At another time he was specially interested in growing chrysanthemums for show purposes. He used his entomological knowledge here to clear his plants of a common black aphid—larvae of ladybirds, collected from the common acacias, did the work efficiently for him.

He was a member of the Council of this Society from 1920 until 1939, and President for the year 1925-26. He was for many years a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London. He was a member of the Council of the Naturalists' Society of New South Wales 1905-07, and Vice-President 1907-09. He was elected to Fellowship of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales in 1931. He took a keen interest in educational affairs, and served on the Council of the Secondary Schools Teachers' Association, and on the Teachers' Registry. For a short period he was a member of the Council of Barker College. With A. W. Jose he was joint editor of the *Australian Encyclopaedia*.

He was greatly interested in the Big Brother Movement, in which he took an active part and which he tried to advance by recounting his own experiences and suggesting from time to time to some of his friends that they might find in the movement a worthwhile interest.

I had the good fortune to be closely associated with him for a number of years, especially during the last few years of his life when I joined him in a weekly game of bridge—than which he enjoyed nothing better—which continued until less than a week before his death. It may be remarked that his occasional recklessness in the bidding at these games was a marked contrast to the carefulness of his scientific work. Perhaps no finer tribute was paid to him than that of Mr. Justice Boyce, who wrote (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24th April, 1940): "A charming personality has passed on. In his fourscore years and more, he achieved many notable successes, but perhaps the greatest was that he left no enemies but only friends. As a master at the Sydney Grammar School for 20 years, thousands of boys, of whom I was one, came under his influence. As principal of the Ascham School for another 12, great numbers of girls profited by his example and his teaching. As president of the Linnean Society, he made his mark in the scientific world. Boys and girls, now men and women, and the learned ones who knew him so well, have only good words to say of Herbert James Carter. He delved in the by-paths. Australian coleoptera and entomology were his special fields of research, and the scientific journals contain many contributions from his pen on these subjects. He was, like his friend, Sir Edgeworth David, busy until the very end. His one regret was that there were so few years left to him in which he had so much to do. Withal he was humble-minded, always anxious to do the job which no one else was willing to do, and then giving the credit to anyone but himself. Scattered through Australia are his old friends and pupils, and in their hearts will there always be a warm corner for H. J. Carter."

He passed away suddenly, in the early morning of 16th April, 1940, without any warning illness, leaving a host of friends among his scientific colleagues and former pupils who hold him in grateful and affectionate memory.

A.B.W.

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